IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

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Applicant	:	Cole	
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Mail Stop Appeal Brief- Patents
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

APPEAL BRIEF

Dear Sir:

The following Appeal Brief is submitted pursuant to the Notice of Appeal dated January 18, 2007 for consideration by the Board of Appeals and Interferences. 37 C.F.R. § 41.37.

(i) REAL PARTY IN INTEREST

The real party in interest is Bally Gaming, Inc.

(ii) RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

There are no prior or pending appeals, interferences, or judicial proceedings known to the appellant, the appellant's legal representative, or the assignee which may be related to, directly affect, or be directly affected by, or have a bearing on the Board's decision in this pending appeal.

(iii) STATUS OF CLAIMS

Claims 1-47 are pending, have been rejected and are now being appealed. Claims 48-50 are canceled.

(iv) STATUS OF AMENDMENTS

No amendments have been filed subsequent to the final rejection mailed July 28, 2006.

(v) SUMMARY OF CLAIMED SUBJECT MATTER

<u>Independent Claim 1:</u>

A method of allowing a United States-taxable player (p. 5, ll. 18-21) to participate in a reduced interruption gaming session (p. 4, ll. 21-28) when a jackpot over a threshold amount is won, the method utilizing a tracking device having a central server (p. 12, ll. 13-19; FIG. 2, 156, 158, 160), and wherein the tracking device is connectable to one or more gaming machines (p. 12, l. 24 – p. 13, l. 20; FIG. 3, 200, 202, 204, 206, 208, 210, 212 and 214), wherein the one or more gaming machines are bingo, keno, or slot machines (p. 8, ll. 12-23), the method comprising:

collecting player-related information (p. 5, ll. 10-21; FIG. 1, 14);

storing the player-related information (p. 5, l. 29 – p. 6, l. 3; FIG. 1, 16);

allowing the player to participate in a reduced interruption gaming session (p. 6, ll. 4-5 and 15-19; FIG. 1, 50);

recording jackpot-related information in the tracking device whenever a jackpot greater than a threshold amount is won (p. 8, ll. 2-10 and 23-27; FIG. 1, 16 and 58);

enabling paying out winnings over the threshold amount via a hopper pay-out to the United States-taxable player immediately after the player wins credits over the threshold amount (p. 9, ll. 14-28);

enabling the player to continue the reduced interruption gaming session, as desired (p. 8, l. 28 – p. 9, l. 1; FIG. 1, 52);

terminating the reduced interruption gaming session (p. 10, ll. 24-30; FIG. 1, 62); and

generating a statement referencing the recorded jackpot-related information and stored player-related information after the reduced interruption gaming session is terminated (p. 11, ll. 1-12; FIG. 1, 64).

Independent Claim 11:

An interactive network linking at least one gaming machine and a central control unit (p. 12, ll. 13-19, p. 12, l. 24 – p. 13, l. 20; FIG. 2, 156, 155 and 160, FIG. 3, 200, 202, 204, 206, 208, 210, 212 and 214) for allowing reduced interruption game play (p. 4, ll. 21-28), wherein the gaming machine is a bingo, keno, or slot machine (p. 8, ll. 12-23), the network comprising:

a central storage unit in electronic communication with the central control unit (p. 12, l. 24 – p. 13, l. 20; FIG. 3, 200, 202, 204, 206, 208, 210, 212 and 214), wherein the central storage unit tracks and stores player-related information adequate for compliance with reporting requirements of a taxing authority (p. 5, l. 29 – p. 6, l. 3 and p. 8, ll. 2-19; FIG. 1, 16 and 58);

at least one gaming machine is in communication with the central control unit (p. 12, l. 24 – p. 13, l. 20; FIG. 3, 200, 202, 204, 206, 208, 210, 212 and 214), the at least one gaming machine is arranged to register a jackpot greater than a threshold amount is won, wherein the at least one gaming machine sends signals representing jackpot-related information to the central control unit, and the jackpot-related information is adequate for compliance with reporting requirements of a taxing authority (p. 8, l. 2-10 and 22-27; FIG. 1, 16 and 58),

wherein the interactive network enables paying out winnings over the threshold amount via a hopper pay-out to a United States-taxable player immediately after the player wins credits over the threshold amount (p. 9, ll. 14-29);

wherein the central control unit automatically returns signals to the at least one gaming machine when jackpot-related information is recorded (p. 9, ll. 6-11; FIG. 1, 60);

wherein the interactive network enables the player to continue the reduced interruption gaming session, as desired (p. 8, l. 28 – p. 9, l. 1; FIG. 1, 52); and

a reporting unit in communication with the central control unit, wherein the reporting unit produces statements referencing player-related information and jackpot-related information, after the reduced interruption gaming session is terminated (p. 10, l. 24 – p. 11, l. 16; FIG. 1, 62 and 64).

Independent Claim 23:

A tracking device utilizing a computer program product comprising a computer useable medium having a protocol stored thereon, wherein said protocol comprises machine readable code to enable a computer network (p. 12, ll. 13-19, p. 12, l. 24 – p. 13, l. 2 and p. 19, ll. 16-20; FIG. 2, 156, 158 and 160 and FIG. 3, 202 and 204) to allow for a reduced interruption play session on a gaming machine to which the tracking device connects (p. 12, l. 24 – p. 13, l. 20; FIG. 3, 200, 202, 204, 206, 208, 210, 212 and 214), even when a reportable jackpot is won (p. 5, ll. 18-21), wherein the gaming machine is a bingo, keno, or slot machine (p. 8, ll. 12-23), the machine readable code comprising:

code to enable a central storage computer to store player-related information (p. 5, l. 29 – p. 6, l. 3 and p. 19, ll. 21-22; FIG. 1, 16);

code to enable a gaming machine to enter a reduced interruption play session in response to a user input (p. 5, ll. 22-28, p. 6, ll. 4-5 and 15-19 and p. 19, ll. 23-24; FIG. 1, 50);

code to enable a gaming machine to send signals representing jackpot-related information to the central storage computer when a reportable jackpot is won (p. 8, ll. 2-5 and p. 20, ll. 1-3; FIG. 1, 58);

code to enable the central storage computer to receive and record jackpot-related information (p. 8, ll. 23-27 and p. 20, ll. 4-5; FIG. 1, 16);

code to enable paying out winnings over a threshold amount via a hopper pay-out to a United States-taxable player immediately after the player wins credits over the threshold amount (p. 9, ll. 14-29 and p. 20, ll. 8-10; FIG. 1, 16);

code to enable a gaming machine to communicate to the central storage computer that a reduced interruption session has ended (p. 10, ll. 24-30 and p. 20, ll. 6-7; FIG. 1, 62);

code to enable the player to continue the reduced interruption gaming session, as desired (p. 8, l. 28 – p. 9, l. 1; FIG. 1, 52); and

code to allow the central storage computer to generate a statement including player-related information and jackpot-related information after a reduced interruption session has ended (p. 11, ll. 1-19 and p. 20, ll. 8-10; FIG. 1, 64).

Independent Claim 24:

A method of allowing a United States-taxable player to participate in a reduced interruption session on a gaming machine (p. 4, ll. 21-28 and p. 5, ll. 18-21), the method utilizing a tracking device having a central computer (p. 12, ll. 13-19; FIG. 2, 156, 158 and 160) and wherein the tracking device is configured to be in electronic communication with the gaming machine (p. 12, l. 24 – p. 13, l. 20; FIG. 3, 200, 202, 204, 206, 208, 210, 212 and 214), even when a reportable jackpot is won, wherein the gaming machine is a bingo, keno, or slot machine (p. 8, ll. 12-23), the method comprising:

collecting player-related information (p. 5, ll. 10-21; FIG. 1, 14);

storing the player-related information in an electronic medium such that it can be accessed by the central computer (p. 5, l. 29 – p. 6, l. 3 and p. 12, l. 24 – p. 13, l. 20; FIG. 1, 16 and FIG. 3, 200, 202, 204, 206, 208, 210, 212 and 214);

allowing the player to play in a reduced interruption session on the gaming machine (p. 6, ll. 4-5 and 15-19; FIG. 1, 50);

sending signals representing jackpot-related information from the gaming machine to an electronic storage device when a reportable jackpot is won;

recording the jackpot-related information in an electronic medium using the tracking device such that the information is accessible by the central computer (p. 8, ll. 2-10 and 22-27; FIG. 1, 16 and 58);

enabling paying out winnings over a threshold amount via a hopper pay-out to the United States-taxable player immediately after the player wins credits over the threshold amount (p. 9, ll. 14-29);

enabling the player to continue the reduced interruption session, as desired (p. 8, l. 28 – p. 9, l. 1; FIG. 1, 52);

accessing the player-related information and jackpot-related information when the player is done playing (p. 11, ll. 6-12); and

generating a statement referencing jackpot-related information and player-related information after the reduced interruption session is terminated, the statement being in a form complying with tax regulations (p. 10, l. 24 – p. 11, l. 16; FIG. 1, 62 and 64).

Independent Claim 29:

A method of allowing reduced interruption gaming (p. 4, ll. 21-28), the method utilizing a tracking device having a central computer (p. 12, ll. 13-19; FIG. 2, 156, 158 and 160) that is configured to be connected to a gaming machine (p. 12, l. 24 – p. 13, l. 20; FIG. 3, 200, 202, 204, 206, 208, 210, 212 and 214), wherein the gaming machine is a bingo, keno, or slot machine (p. 8, ll. 12-23), the method comprising:

collecting player-related information adequate to satisfy the reporting requirements of a taxing authority (p. 5, ll. 10-21; FIG. 1, 14);

storing the player-related information (p. 5, l. 29 – p. 6, l. 3; FIG. 1, 16);

allowing a United States-taxable player to participate in a reduced interruption gaming session (p. 6, ll. 4-5 and 15-19; FIG. 1, 50);

receiving electronic signals representing jackpot-related information from the gaming machine at the central computer when a jackpot greater than a threshold amount is won, the jackpot-related information being adequate to satisfy the reporting requirements of the taxing authority (p. 5, l. 29 – p. 6, l. 3 and p. 8, ll. 2-19; FIG. 1, 16 and 58);

recording the jackpot-related information when electronic signals representing the jackpot-related information are received from the gaming machine at the central computer (p. 8, ll. 23-27; FIG. 1, 16));

returning signals from the central computer to the gaming machine when jackpot-related information has been recorded (p. 9, ll. 6-11; FIG. 1, 60);

enabling paying out winnings over a threshold amount via a hopper pay-out to the United States-taxable player immediately after the player wins credits over the threshold amount (p. 9, ll. 14-29);

enabling the player to continue the reduced interruption gaming session, as desired (p. 8, l. 28 – p. 9, l. 1); and

generating a statement referencing the recorded jackpot-related information and stored player-related information after the reduced interruption gaming session is terminated (p. 11, ll. 1-12; FIG. 1, 64).

Independent Claim 36:

An interactive network linking at least one gaming machine and a central control unit (p. 12, ll. 13-19, p. 12, l. 24 – p. 13, l. 20; FIG. 2, 156, 155 and 160 and FIG. 3, 200, 202, 204, 206, 208, 210, 212 and 214) for allowing reduced interruption game play (p. 4, ll. 21-28), wherein the gaming machine is a bingo, keno, or slot machine (p. 8, ll. 12-23), the network comprising:

a central storage unit in electronic communication with the central control unit (p. 12, l. 24 – p. 13, l. 20; FIG. 3, 200, 202, 204, 206, 208, 210, 212 and 214), wherein the central storage unit tracks and stores player-related information adequate for compliance with reporting requirements of a taxing authority (p. 5, l. 29 – p. 6, l. 3 and p. 8, ll. 2-19; FIG. 1, 16 and 58);

wherein the at least one gaming machine is in communication with the central control unit (p. 12, l. 24 – p. 13, l. 20; FIG. 3, 200, 202, 204, 206, 208, 210, 212 and 214), the at least one gaming machine is arranged to interrupt play only whenever a stop signal is received from the central control unit or an error occurs (p. 9, ll. 1-5), the at least one gaming machine sends signals representing jackpot-related information to the central control unit whenever a reportable jackpot is won, and the jackpot-related information is adequate for compliance with reporting requirements of a taxing authority (p. 8, l. 2-10 and 22-27; FIG. 1, 16, 58);

wherein the interactive network enables paying out winnings over a threshold amount via a hopper pay-out to a United States-taxable player immediately after the player wins credits over the threshold amount (p. 9, ll. 14-29);

wherein the interactive network enables the player to continue the reduced interruption play, as desired (p. 8, l. 28 – p. 9, l. 1; FIG. 1, 52);

wherein the central control unit automatically returns stop signals to the at least one gaming machine if a write error occurs when jackpot-related information is recorded, the returned stop signals causing the at least one gaming machine to interrupt play (p. 9, ll. 1-11, FIG. 1, 60); and

a reporting unit in communication with the central control unit, wherein the reporting unit produces statements referencing player-related information and jackpot-related information, after the reduced interruption gaming session is terminated (p. 10, l. 24 – p. 11, l. 16; FIG. 1, 62 and 64).

(vi) GROUNDS OF REJECTION TO BE REVIEWED ON APPEAL

Claims 11-19, 22-25, 27-33, 35-44 and 47 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) in view of Acres (USP 6,312,333).

Claims 1, 2 and 4-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of Bell *et al.* (USP 5,505,461) and further in view of Acres.

Claim 3 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of Bell and Acres as applied to claim 1, further in view of Bergeron *et al.* (USP 4,882,473) and further in view of Pease *et al.* (USP 5,326,104).

Claims 20, 21, 26, 34, 45 and 46 were rejected in view of Acres as applied to claim 19, 24, 33, or 44 (if applicable) in view of Bergeron and further in view of Pease.

(vii) ARGUMENT

Claims 11-19, 22-25, 27-33, 35-44 and 47 are not anticipated by Acres:

To anticipate a claim, the reference must teach each and every element of the claim. *MPEP § 2131.* Independent claim 11 recites the limitations, "wherein the interactive network enables paying out winnings over the threshold amount via a hopper pay-out to a United States-taxable player immediately after the player wins credits over the threshold amount" and "wherein the interactive network enables the player to continue the reduced interruption gaming session, as desired." Although the Examiner asserted four bases why Acres discloses this limitation, the rationale is not supported by Acres, as set forth below.

(1) The Examiner asserted that Acres discloses that there will be times where no money will be withheld, relying on the passage, "[t]he payment amount is determined by the amount won and the withholding amount if any. If a withholding amount is specified, it is deducted from the amount to be paid." See Acres, 6:59-63. However, Acres's withholding amount is determined "by taking into account the bonus amount originally won <u>and</u> any applicable tax withholding prescribed by IRS regulations." See Acres, 6:35-38 (emphasis added). In other words, the Acres gaming machine withholds a percentage of the winnings over the threshold amount for tax payment. Although Acres identifies times when no money is withheld, those

times are <u>only</u> when the players winnings are <u>under</u> the threshold jackpot.

(2) The Examiner further asserted that Acres, at 6:50, discloses that in cases where the player already has the necessary information on file, Acres will "immediately approve the award and make payment." However, Acres's preceding sentence states that "[o]nce the amount to be paid is determined, the casino can program the system, in accordance with IRS requirements, to take one of several actions." (Emphasis added). The further actions, as shown in Acres, 6:13-46, are: (a) <u>intentionally locking-up</u> the gaming machine if the payout is <u>over</u> a pre-established threshold jackpot, (b) performing a calculation based upon the amount of payout <u>over</u> the pre-established threshold jackpot, and (c) reducing the amount of the payout <u>over</u> the threshold jackpot. Once the reduced payout has been authorized, Acres unlocks the gaming machine. Only after these anything but immediate events occur, can the Acres patent "approve the winning and make payment."

(3) The Examiner next asserted that the verbiage at Acres, 6:63-64, "[i]n some cases, the protocol will not contain such a command," supports the averment that there are times discussed in Acres when no money is withheld. In contrast to the Examiner's proclamation, this sentence refers to a command. Examining the surrounding paragraph, in its entirety, Acres, at 6:56-66, discloses "an appropriate command" or "an electro-mechanical relay" for resetting the game to standard operation after it has been "locked-up" for a payout. In turn, Acres's lock-up cannot disclose the claimed reduced interrupted gaming session.

(4) Lastly, the Examiner asserted that the verbiage at Acres, 6:40-50, "Immediately approv[ing] the award and mak[ing] payment," supports the tenet that winnings are paid immediately. In contrast to the Examiner's notions, Acres, at 6:40-50, discloses that the <u>reduced</u> amount is immediately approved and awarded directly at the machine, once the reduced amount to be paid has been determined (emphasis added). Accordingly, Acres's "immediate" payout is "a reduced payout," consistent with all Acres's winnings <u>over</u> the threshold jackpot. As Acres's payout is awarded subsequent to the calculation and generation of a tax withholding, Acres cannot disclose an immediate payout of all winnings over the threshold jackpot.

In conclusion, because Acres does not disclose, either expressly or inherently, each and every limitation of claim 11, claim 11 is not anticipated by Acres. For similar reasons,

independent claims 23, 24, 29 and 36 are not anticipated by Acres. Moreover, by virtue of their respective dependence from claims 11, 23, 24, 29 and 36, dependent claims 12-19 and 22, 24-25 and 27-28, 20-33 and 35 and 37-44 and 47 are not anticipated by Acres.

Claims 1, 2 and 4-10 are not obvious from Bell in view of Acres:

"To establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, [. . .] the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all of the claim limitations." *MPEP 706.02(j)*. Independent claim 1 recites the limitations, "enabling paying out winnings over the threshold amount via a hopper pay-out to the United States-taxable player immediately after the player wins credits over the threshold amount" and "enabling the player to continue the reduced interruption gaming session, as desired." Although the Examiner asserted three bases why Bell teaches these limitations, the rationale is not supported by Bell, as set forth below.

(1) The Examiner asserted that the Bell teaches ensuring that a player continuously maintains access to all winnings, including all winnings over the threshold jackpot. The Examiner further asserted that Bell teaches that the winnings over the threshold jackpot are transferred to the IRS meter, where the player may use them to make additional wagers. In contrast to the Examiner's assertions, Bell, at 3:38-3, teaches that all winnings over the threshold jackpot are placed on an IRS reporting credit meter. Although Bell's player has access to the winnings on the IRS reporting credit meter for placing bets, Bell's player does not have access to the winnings on the IRS reporting credit meter for immediate cash out. In order to cash out, Bell's player must complete the procedure described at 4:45-63: (a) an attendant will access the IRS win meter, prepare a W2-G form, and use a key to reset the IRS win meter, or (b) a print out corresponding to the amount of winnings stored in the IRS win meter will be printed on a W2-G form and the IRS win meter will be reset. Because the jackpot-related information statement must be generated, either by an attendant or by an automated printer, before a pay-out can occur, Bell's player cannot achieve continuous access to the winnings on the IRS reporting credit meter for immediate cash out.

(2) The Examiner further asserted that Bell teaches recording the nationality of a player so that money will not be withheld in cases where IRS rules do not apply. As claim 1 is directed to, and positively recites, "a United States-taxable player," the Examiner's contention is false.

(3) While the Examiner admitted that the Bell patent "fails to teach enabling the payout before the jackpot related information is generated," the Examiner asserted that the Acres verbiage, at 6:50, "Immediately approve the award and make payment," teaches the relevant limitations. As explained above with regard to the anticipation rejection, Acres does not disclose the limitations at issue.

In sum, because none of Bell, Acres and the combination of Bell and Acres discloses, teaches, or suggests each and every limitation of claim 1, claim 1 is not obvious from Bell, in view of Acres. Moreover, by virtue of their dependence from claim 1, claims 2 and 4-10 are not obvious from Bell, in view of Acres.

Claim 3 is not obvious from Bell and Acres as applied to claim 1 and further in view of Bergeron and further in view of Pease:

The Examiner asserted that Bell teaches the invention substantially as claimed, but does not teach inserting an agent card or selecting uninterrupted play from a menu. The Examiner further asserted that Bergeron teaches insertion of an agent card for the purpose of enhancing security and that Pease teaches a menu-driven system. In short, the deficiencies of Bell are succinctly described in the arguments relating to claim 1. The Examiner has not proffered any detail, and in fact none exists, as to how Bergeron or Pease overcome the deficiencies of Bell. As none of Bell, Bergeron, Pease and combinations of Bell, Bergeron and Pease disclose, teach, or suggest each and every limitation of claim 3, claim 3 is not obvious from Bell, in view of Bergeron and further in view of Pease.

Claims 20, 21, 26, 34, 45 and 46 are not obvious from Acres as applied to claim 19, 24, 33 or 44 (if applicable) in view of Bergeron and further in view of Pease:

The Examiner asserted that the Acres patent teaches the invention substantially as claimed, but does not teach inserting an agent card or selecting uninterrupted play from a menu. The Examiner further asserted that Bergeron teaches insertion of an agent card for the purpose of enhancing security and that Pease teaches a menu-driven system. The shortcomings of Acres are well documented above with regard to the argument set forth for claims 11, 24, 29 and 36. The Examiner has not provided any detail, and in fact none exists, as to how Bergeron or Pease

overcome the shortcomings of Acres. As none of Acres, Bergeron, Pease and combinations of Acres, Bergeron and Pease disclose, teach, or suggest each and every limitation of independent claims 11, 24, 29 and 36, all of the respective dependent claims 20, 21, 26, 34, 45 and 46 are not obvious from Acres, in view of Bergeron and further in view of Pease.
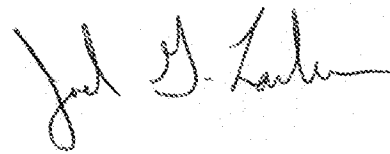
CONCLUSION AND RELIEF

In view of two interviews, over half a dozen responses to Office action rejections and two requests for continued examination, the Examiner proclaimed that, "Applicant has submitted voluminous arguments that can be summarized in one sentence – that Acres does not and cannot teach immediate payouts of the full winnings for US nationals winning more than the threshold amount. Examiner disagrees." See Office action mailed July 28, 2006, p. 11, ¶ 8. Although the Examiner has been steadfast in clinging to Acres, the facts do not support the Examiner's rejections. Acres does not anticipate and Bell, in combination with Acres, does not render obvious any of the claims of this appeal.

In conclusion, we respectfully request that the Board overturn the rejections of claims 1-47 and hold claims 1-47 allowable.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: March 19, 2007

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(viii) CLAIMS APPENDIX

The claims involved in this Appeal are as follows:

1.   A method of allowing a United States-taxable player to participate in a reduced interruption gaming session when a jackpot over a threshold amount is won, the method utilizing a tracking device having a central server, and wherein the tracking device is connectable to one or more gaming machines, wherein the one or more gaming machines are bingo, keno, or slot machines, the method comprising:

collecting player-related information;

storing the player-related information;

allowing the player to participate in a reduced interruption gaming session;

recording jackpot-related information in the tracking device whenever a jackpot greater than a threshold amount is won;

enabling paying out winnings over the threshold amount via a hopper pay-out to the United States-taxable player immediately after the player wins credits over the threshold amount;

enabling the player to continue the reduced interruption gaming session, as desired;

terminating the reduced interruption gaming session; and

generating a statement referencing the recorded jackpot-related information and stored player-related information after the reduced interruption gaming session is terminated.

2.   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

enabling a pre-programmed gaming machine to play an uninterrupted session, even if a reportable jackpot is won.

3.   The method of claim 2, wherein enabling a pre-programmed gaming machine to play an uninterrupted session, even if a reportable jackpot is won, comprises:

inserting an agent card;

selecting uninterrupted play from a menu screen on a display; and

inserting a player card.

4.   The method of claim 1, wherein allowing the player to participate in a reduced interruption gaming session, comprises:

providing the player with physical access to a game of chance dedicated to uninterrupted play.

5.   The method of claim 1, wherein collecting player-related information further comprises:

examining documents which qualify as proof of the player's identity.

6.   The method of claim 1, wherein collecting player-related information further comprises:

obtaining tax related information about the player.

7.   The method of claim 6, wherein obtaining tax related information about the player further comprises:

accessing a document selected from the group consisting of the player's driver's license, the player's social security card, and the player's voter registration card.

8.   The method of claim 6, wherein the tax related information comprises the name, address, and tax identification number of the player.

9.   The method of claim 1, further comprising reporting jackpot-related information and player-related information to a taxing authority.

10.   The method of claim 1, further comprising providing the player with a statement referencing jackpot-related information after the player is done playing.

11.   An interactive network linking at least one gaming machine and a central control unit for allowing reduced interruption game play, wherein the gaming machine is a bingo, keno, or slot machine, the network comprising:

a central storage unit in electronic communication with the central control unit, wherein the central storage unit tracks and stores player-related information adequate for compliance with reporting requirements of a taxing authority;

at least one gaming machine is in communication with the central control unit, the at least

one gaming machine is arranged to register a jackpot greater than a threshold amount is won, wherein the at least one gaming machine sends signals representing jackpot-related information to the central control unit, and the jackpot-related information is adequate for compliance with reporting requirements of a taxing authority,

wherein the interactive network enables paying out winnings over the threshold amount via a hopper pay-out to a United States-taxable player immediately after the player wins credits over the threshold amount;

wherein the central control unit automatically returns signals to the at least one gaming machine when jackpot-related information is recorded;

wherein the interactive network enables the player to continue the reduced interruption gaming session, as desired; and

a reporting unit in communication with the central control unit, wherein the reporting unit produces statements referencing player-related information and jackpot-related information, after the reduced interruption gaming session is terminated.

12. The network of claim 11, wherein the central control unit is a computer.

13. The network of claim 11, wherein the player-related information includes a name, an address, and a tax identification number of a player.

14. The network of claim 11, wherein the reporting unit comprises a printer for printing jackpot-related and player-related information on a form required by a taxing authority for jackpots over a threshold amount.

15. The network of claim 11, wherein the at least one gaming machine includes a microprocessor programmed with a protocol for reduced interruption game play.

16. The network of claim 15, further comprising:

a networking computer connected to a plurality of gaming machines and the central control unit, the networking computer facilitating electronic communication between the plurality of gaming machines and the central control unit.

17.   The network of claim 15, further comprising:

a player card encoder, wherein each of the at least one gaming machines is in electronic communication with a card reader capable of reading information encoded on a player card.

18.   The network of claim 17, wherein the at least one gaming machine is in communication with a keypad.

19.   The network of claim 18, wherein the protocol for reduced interruption game play is capable of being activated by an enabling event.

20.   The network of claim 19, wherein the enabling event includes insertion of an agent card into the card reader, selection of reduced interruption play using the keypad, and insertion of a player card into the card reader.

21.   The network of claim 20, wherein the protocol for reduced interruption game play is deactivated by removal of the player card from the card reader.

22.   The network of claim 15, wherein physical access is limited to the at least one gaming machine.

23.   A tracking device utilizing a computer program product comprising a computer useable medium having a protocol stored thereon, wherein said protocol comprises machine readable code to enable a computer network to allow for a reduced interruption play session on a gaming machine to which the tracking device connects, even when a reportable jackpot is won, wherein the gaming machine is a bingo, keno, or slot machine, the machine readable code comprising:

code to enable a central storage computer to store player-related information;

code to enable a gaming machine to enter a reduced interruption play session in response to a user input;

code to enable a gaming machine to send signals representing jackpot-related information to the central storage computer when a reportable jackpot is won;

code to enable the central storage computer to receive and record jackpot-related information;

code to enable paying out winnings over a threshold amount via a hopper pay-out to a

United States-taxable player immediately after the player wins credits over the threshold amount;

code to enable a gaming machine to communicate to the central storage computer that a reduced interruption session has ended;

code to enable the player to continue the reduced interruption gaming session, as desired; and

code to allow the central storage computer to generate a statement including player-related information and jackpot-related information after a reduced interruption session has ended.

24.   A method of allowing a United States-taxable player to participate in a reduced interruption session on a gaming machine, the method utilizing a tracking device having a central computer and wherein the tracking device is configured to be in electronic communication with the gaming machine, even when a reportable jackpot is won, wherein the gaming machine is a bingo, keno, or slot machine, the method comprising:

collecting player-related information;

storing the player-related information in an electronic medium such that it can be accessed by the central computer;

allowing the player to play in a reduced interruption session on the gaming machine;

sending signals representing jackpot-related information from the gaming machine to an electronic storage device when a reportable jackpot is won;

recording the jackpot-related information in an electronic medium using the tracking device such that the information is accessible by the central computer;

enabling paying out winnings over a threshold amount via a hopper pay-out to the United States-taxable player immediately after the player wins credits over the threshold amount;

enabling the player to continue the reduced interruption session, as desired;

accessing the player-related information and jackpot-related information when the player is done playing; and

generating a statement referencing jackpot-related information and player-related information after the reduced interruption session is terminated, the statement being in a form complying with tax regulations.

25.   The method of claim 24, further comprising:

returning signals from the central computer to the gaming machine after the jackpot-related information has been recorded, the returned signals causing the gaming machine to unlock.

26.   The method of claim 24, wherein allowing the player to play in a reduced interruption session on the gaming machine comprises:

providing the player with a player card encoded with at least one piece of player-related information;

inserting an agent card into a card reader in communication with the gaming machine;

entering enabling information into a keypad in communication with the gaming machine;

removing the agent card from the card reader;

introducing the player card into the card reader;

sending enabling information from the gaming machine to the central computer;

receiving a return signal from the central computer confirming authorization to participate in uninterrupted play; and

beginning an uninterrupted session on the gaming machine.

27.   The method of claim 24, wherein allowing the player to play in a reduced interruption session on the gaming machine further comprises:

providing physical access to a gaming machine dedicated to reduced interruption game play.

28.   The method of claim 24, wherein the statement comprises IRS Form W2-G.

29.   A method of allowing reduced interruption gaming, the method utilizing a tracking device having a central computer that is configured to be connected to a gaming machine, wherein the gaming machine is a bingo, keno, or slot machine, the method comprising:

collecting player-related information adequate to satisfy the reporting requirements of a taxing authority;

storing the player-related information;

allowing a United States-taxable player to participate in a reduced interruption gaming session;

receiving electronic signals representing jackpot-related information from the gaming machine at the central computer when a jackpot greater than a threshold amount is won, the jackpot-related information being adequate to satisfy the reporting requirements of the taxing authority;

recording the jackpot-related information when electronic signals representing the jackpot-related information are received from the gaming machine at the central computer;

returning signals from the central computer to the gaming machine when jackpot-related information has been recorded;

enabling paying out winnings over a threshold amount via a hopper pay-out to the United States-taxable player immediately after the player wins credits over the threshold amount;

enabling the player to continue the reduced interruption gaming session, as desired; and

generating a statement referencing the recorded jackpot-related information and stored player-related information after the reduced interruption gaming session is terminated.

30.   The method of claim 29, wherein collecting player-related information adequate to satisfy the reporting requirements of a taxing authority further comprises:

accessing a document selected from the group consisting of the player's driver's license, the player's social security card, and the player's voter registration card.

31.   The method of claim 29, further comprising:

reporting jackpot-related information and player-related information to a taxing authority.

32.   The method of claim 29, further comprising:

providing the player with a statement referencing jackpot-related information after the player is done participating.

33.   The method of claim 29, wherein allowing the player to participate in a reduced interruption gaming session comprises:

enabling a pre-programmed gaming machine to execute a protocol putting the gaming machine in to uninterrupted mode.

34.   The method of claim 33, wherein enabling a pre-programmed gaming machine to execute a protocol putting the gaming machine in to uninterrupted mode comprises:

inserting an agent card;

selecting uninterrupted play from a menu screen on a display; and

inserting a player card.

35.   The method of claim 29, wherein allowing the player to participate in a reduced interruption gaming session further comprises:

providing the player with physical access to a game of chance dedicated to reduced interruption play.

36.   An interactive network linking at least one gaming machine and a central control unit for allowing reduced interruption play, wherein the gaming machine is a bingo, keno, or slot machine, the network comprising:

a central storage unit in electronic communication with the central control unit, wherein the central storage unit tracks and stores player-related information adequate for compliance with reporting requirements of a taxing authority;

wherein the at least one gaming machine is in communication with the central control unit, the at least one gaming machine is arranged to interrupt play only whenever a stop signal is received from the central control unit or an error occurs, the at least one gaming machine sends signals representing jackpot-related information to the central control unit whenever a reportable jackpot is won, and the jackpot-related information is adequate for compliance with reporting requirements of a taxing authority;

wherein the interactive network enables paying out winnings over a threshold amount via a hopper pay-out to a United States-taxable player immediately after the player wins credits over the threshold amount;

wherein the interactive network enables the player to continue the reduced interruption play, as desired;

wherein the central control unit automatically returns stop signals to the at least one gaming machine if a write error occurs when jackpot-related information is recorded, the returned stop signals causing the at least one gaming machine to interrupt play; and

a reporting unit in communication with the central control unit, wherein the reporting unit

produces statements referencing player-related information and jackpot-related information, after the reduced interruption gaming session is terminated.

37. The network of claim 36, wherein the central control unit is a computer.

38. The network of claim 36, wherein the player-related information includes a name, an address, and a tax identification number of a player.

39. The network of claim 36, wherein the reporting unit comprises a printer for printing jackpot-related and player-related information in a form required by a taxing authority.

40. The network of claim 36, wherein the at least one gaming machine includes a microprocessor programmed with a protocol for reduced interruption play.

41. The network of claim 40, further comprising:

a networking computer connected to a plurality of gaming machines and the central control unit, the networking computer facilitating electronic communication between the plurality of gaming machines and the central control unit.

42. The network of claim 40, further comprising:

a player card encoder, wherein each of the at least one gaming machines is in electronic communication with a card reader capable of reading information encoded on a player card.

43. The network of claim 42, wherein the at least one gaming machine is in communication with a keypad.

44. The network of claim 43, wherein the protocol for reduced interruption play is capable of being activated by an enabling event.

45. The network of claim 44, wherein the enabling event includes insertion of an agent card into the card reader, selection of reduced interruption play using the keypad, and insertion of a player card into the card reader.

46. The network of claim 45 wherein the protocol for reduced interruption play is deactivated by removal of the player card from the card reader.

47.   The network of claim 40, wherein physical access is limited to the at least one gaming machine.

(ix) EVIDENCE APPENDIX

No evidence has been submitted pursuant to §§ 1.130, 1.131, or 1.132 of this title. No other evidence has been entered by the examiner and relied upon by appellant in the appeal.

(x) RELATED PROCEEDINGS APPENDIX

As there are no prior or pending appeals, interferences, or judicial proceedings known to the appellant, the appellant's legal representative, or the assignee which may be related to, directly affect, or be directly affected by, or have a bearing on the Board's decision in this pending appeal (pursuant to 37 CFR § 41.37(c)(1)(ii)), there are no decisions rendered by a court or the Board in any proceedings to include herein.